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ZNY SSSSS ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8662
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 000527

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STATE FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/28/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [IR](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: UAE PRESIDENT ASSURES IRAN OF UAE NEUTRALITY IN
EVENT OF CONFLICT--PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PERSPECTIVES

REF: A. ABU DHABI 479

[1](#)B. ABU DHABI 145

[1](#)C. ABU DHABI 187

Classified By: Ambassador Michele Sison, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (U) In a March 27 interview with the London-based Arabic daily Al-Hayat, UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed declared that the UAE rejects the use of its land, air and territorial waters to be used in an attack on another country. Responding to a question whether it would be possible for UAE territory or air space to be used either to launch a strike against Iran or to provide military or logistical facilities in support of such a strike, Khalifa stated: "We have assured our brothers in Iran, in a letter recently delivered by the Foreign Minister, that we are not a party in its dispute with the United States, and that we will not allow any force to use our territories for military, security, or intelligence activities against Iran." Today, s Arabic and English dailies ran headlines like the following: "Khalifa: UAE not to be used for Iran attack."

[1](#)2. (S) The President's public declarations contrast with those made recently by Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Mohammed bin Zayed (MbZ) in private meetings with US officials. In February MbZ told USAF Chief General Moseley that Iran's nuclear program threatened the stability of the Gulf and must be delayed "by all means available" (ref C), echoing comments he made to General Abizaid in January when he said that Iran "has to be dealt with before they do something tragic" (ref B). Mirroring MbZ's strident language with US officials, Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed (AbZ) told Treasury U/S Levey in March that the Iranians will not do anything to change until they see themselves losing influence and that "you have the upper hand" over them. Stating adamantly that Iran has a "clear nuclear goal--they want a bomb and a delivery system," Abz said that although other GCC member states are equally frustrated with Iran, nobody will say so publicly (ref A).

[1](#)3. (S) Comment: Public comments by UAE officials promising neutrality and insisting that the UAE will not be used as a base for a U.S. strike against Iran can be seen as an attempt to assuage its larger and militarily superior neighbor in a period of heightened tension. The UAEG is a long-time provider of significant support for U.S. military operations, including the USAF presence at Al Dhafra Air Base in Abu Dhabi, and fleet support at Jebel Ali and other ports. There have been no comments by UAE officials in private that would indicate any reduction of that support or a chance that support could be withdrawn in a conflict with Iran. Although senior UAEG officials have expressed trepidation over the prospect of getting caught in the middle of a US-Iran

conflict, the UAE continues to deepen the mil-mil relationship in terms of training, cooperation, weapons acquisition and interoperability. End Comment.
SISON